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SOME OLD PIECES OF CHINESE PORCELAIN.



CHINESE PORCELAIN POT.
IN LOUIS XIV. STYLE.

A VERY sumptuous work, "La Porcelaine de Chine," by O. du Sartel, and the most complete one on the subject yet produced, has lately appeared in Paris. It contains numerous colored plates, for the most part so accurate in every detail that it almost seems as if the objects themselves appear before you. Besides, many ordinary illustrations are introduced in the text. Some of these, of interesting old pieces, we have selected for reproduction. The vessel shown in the margin, designated as of the period of Louis XIV.,

we need hardly say is not Chinese either in form or gilt bronze mounting. It doubtless was made to order for the European market, as was very common at that time. This pot is now in the Beurdeley collection.

It is easy to understand the difficulty, which comes even to the connoisseur at times, of distinguishing between Chinese and Japanese ceramic ware when we look at such an object as the beautiful vase illustrated on this page. The style of decoration is so servilely in imitation of the Hizen that from a first glance at the illustration one would say that the piece was Japanese. The vase is decorated with blue "lambrequin" borders on a red ground further embellished with foliage in white and gold and various Chinese emblems. The sides are decorated with flowering shrubs whose sturdy stems, painted in black and touched up with gold, spring from rocks of various tones of blue; the flowers are gracefully drawn and painted red and gold. The cover is surmounted by a dog of Fo in biscuit. This vase is about twenty inches in height and belongs to M. du Sartel. The two eighteenth century bowls shown on the opposite page are about seven inches in diameter. One is white, decorated in rose enamel with Buddhist symbols and emblematic borders; it belongs to the Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys. The other has a border above and one below, the ground being alternately green and red, with designs in white and rose. The rest of the bowl has a ground of enamelled black, decorated with eight Buddhist figures; it belongs to M. du Sartel. The old Chinese vase profusely colored in imitation of the Japanese style is about twenty-eight inches high and belongs to M. Halphen.

GROUPS FOR CHINA-PAINTING.

VARIOUS inquiries addressed to us from time to time for instructions in the preparation of grounds for china-painting are fully covered in the following extract from Camille Piton's "China Painting in America" (John Wiley & Sons, publishers):

For grounds put on with the brush, take the color in the ordinary manner, and, after the design is made upon the plate, lay on the color wherever the grounding is perceptible. Do not allow the strokes of the brush to be seen, and do not equalize with the putois the places where the color is thicker.

To make the borders of plates, after having prepared enough color with a little fat turpentine, take a wide and flat brush and charge it perfectly evenly. Add a few drops of lavender, which prevents the color from drying too quickly, and allow time for stippling. Make the strokes of the brush in the direction of the border, about one inch long, without passing twice over the same place. Make the strokes parallel to each other

without paying attention to the drop left by each stroke, and being careful to cover all of the white of the plate. The plate should not be inclined, but horizontal, and with a dry putois, about as wide as a cent and free from dust, begin to stipple perpendicularly. Strike with little strokes, very lightly at first, never twice in the same place, and without letting the weight of the putois remain upon the color, and without rubbing over the color. Turn the putois in the fingers so as to form a series of circles that will disappear little by little, removing at the same time the spots formed by the drops. The putois should never become charged with color if the latter is quite fat, otherwise it will remove the color from the ground. Should it become slightly soiled, it must be cleaned, well dried with a muslin cloth, and blown upon in order that the hairs may not stick together. In order to see if the putois is dry, you rub it on your nail. If the nail becomes brilliant, the putois contains some turpentine and is not dry. I have had pupils who could make groundings with a putois charged with color, and could make them well, but this process requires more time, is less practicable, and should not be employed. Avoid moisture with great care; it would prevent the grounding from glazing. If the color be laid on too dry, it

sign on the plate, and with India-ink or carmine and water make an outline of the whole drawing. As soon as the outline is finished in water color, rub out the red lines and any spots made by the transferring paper, when used, with a brush and turpentine, and dry it with a fine muslin rag. Then lay the colors down and stipple, without paying attention to the drawing, which will not be effaced, since turpentine is insoluble in water, and allow the whole to dry during at least one day. The design may always be seen through the layer of grounding. Charge a brush with oil of cloves, without taking too much, and carefully cover the subject, following the interior outline; then with a muslin rag wipe gently from the border, and the outline will be sharply uncovered.

If the subject be a figure, it is not necessary to cover all the interior of the figure with the ground; it is sufficient to carry the ground over the outline traced in water color, and clean it off afterward in the manner indicated.

Some practice should be acquired in making graded groundings, that is, lighter above than below, and reciprocally, with a single color. The lighter portion is obtained by putting more or less liquid with the color. A little practice is required for this. Stipple.

Grounds may also be made by making a pad or tampon of perfectly clean cotton enveloped in dry muslin or silk. This pad is used like a putois, turning it so as not to repeat the same impression. Clouds can readily be made by this method; care must be taken to give them a proper form, after a good model, observing that the light strikes the outline of the cloud well and on only one side. Generally it comes upon the upper border of the cloud, while the shadow is below. If the ground is blue sky, the upper border of the clouds will be white, and to make the shadows a little gray must be added, which is tamponed on according to the model. It may be necessary to make the skies, and consequently the clouds, of all colors, as in painting in monochrome.

Grounds of perfect softness may also be made with powdered colors. Pass a layer of turpentine over the plate, and before it is too dry sprinkle it with the powder of the desired grounding in the most uniform manner possible. After several trials groundings may be produced of, so to speak, mechanical uniformity; it is better to leave these grounds, which possess nothing artistic, to the wholesale manufacturers.

Grounds are sometimes made of different colors. Thus if you have a landscape with an even sky, starting from yellow and grading into blue by insensible passages, first make the blue, which is then blended upon the white of the porcelain or the faience. The upper part is darker and is easily graded with a putois. After this operation, the plate is turned and the same process is repeated for the yellow, care being taken not to mix these two colors at their union. If the yellow encroaches upon the silhouette of the landscape, it is removed, and a graded sky of good effect is obtained.

Thus far unmixed colors have been employed, chosen by the taste of the pupil. There are colors which are already prepared for grounds; their composition and manufacture are special; they are more fusible because they must not be baked at the same firing (the fixing-fire—feu d'attache—being lighter), and they cannot be generally mixed with the other colors for painting. They are sometimes formed by mixtures of colors, and sometimes by the addition of the flux to the palette colors. This rule is not absolute, but it is better to observe it for delicate works when the baker is skilled, otherwise it may be the cause of failure in the baking.

The coral (chromate of lead), which often changes to yellow or even green by the heat, the water greens (copper and chrome), must never be used in painting, but the palette colors, though specially prepared for painting, may also be used for groundings.



CHINESE PORCELAIN VASE
DECORATED IN IMITATION OF HIZEN WARE.

sometimes happens that it does not glaze well. It will be found in practice that carmine, purple and blues require more fat turpentine and are less convenient to employ than others; that certain colors attract more dust than others. To obviate the latter inconvenience, take a needle and carefully remove all the little spots in the grounding before it becomes dry. When a ground is freshly painted you breathe on it so you curdle the essences, and the dust will not take on the colors.

For grounding upon the whole plate, proceed in the same manner, without paying attention to the color which accumulates in the circular lines formed by the action of the lathe on which the plate has been made; with a little skill they may be removed by the putois.

The preceding grounds are even and contain no design. If it is desired to make a ground for a design such as flowers, Cupids, etc., begin by placing the de-

There are also colors for groundings that can only be obtained by a mixture, which should be made with a knife on a glass slab, care being taken to mix a sufficient quantity and always to employ the same quantity of the same color if a work of several pieces be required, for example, a table service.

Grounds of a peculiar quality, that cannot be obtained in any other manner, may be made by the following process: Make a first layer of fine bright yellow and have it baked; for the second firing superimpose a coat of carmine or of purple, and a vermilion or orange red will be obtained that would be impossible to produce by a mixture applied at one time. The yellow must not be too thickly applied, otherwise the red of the second coat would be altered and the ground would be dirty. By this process grounds having a remarkable value of tone may be obtained.



CHINESE PORCELAIN BOWL OF THE 18TH CENTURY.
DECORATED WITH BUDDHIST SYMBOLS.

The groundings most easily applied are those of red-brown and iron violet. Carmine and gray are more difficult.

The grounds must not be made too dark. Light grounds are better for beginning. The black grounds are to be avoided, as the effect is hardly ever good, and the black colors will easily chip off.

We use generally two blacks, ivory and raven black. The black of iridium is well suited for soft paste porcelain (*pâte tendre*), on which we can use also a mixture of deep purple and deep green No. 7, and we will obtain a dark tint. On hard porcelain we can use either ivory or raven black, but it will chip off in many cases. So we are compelled to use a mixture of deep red and dark blue. The best way is to put the dark tint in two firings, so we will avoid the chipping off. We may add a little black, either ivory or raven black, with these colors.

When the grounding of a plate is to be of one color and the border of another, it is necessary to begin first in the centre and completely finish the grounding and the motive before making the border; otherwise it would be necessary to have the border baked before painting the centre.

Lastly, broken grounds, that is, containing several colors, may be made here dark, there light, according as the neighboring tones or fancy may suggest. Here the taste of the artist must decide, and the professor has only to judge of the ensemble without being able to give advice in advance.

Care must be taken not to soil the grounding, either by sneezing, letting fall drops of water, rain, alcohol, turpentine, lavender, etc., etc., or by putting the fingers on it, letting fall a brush, or touching it with anything, or by rubbing it with the hand-rest; for all of the work would then be lost, and it would be necessary to entirely recommence it. Ordinarily, for a long and serious work, the grounding is baked alone; when it is once fixed by a light firing the work may be conducted without fear.

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.

It is strange how much confusion exists in the mind of many general writers as to the difference between pottery and porcelain. As our readers know, of course, all the early productions of the factories of Europe were varieties of earthenware or pottery. Porcelain was obtained only from the East, and especially from the country which has given to the ware its familiar name—China. The confusion arises from misapplication of these distinctive terms. Dr. Lardner, for example, in his interesting sketch of the History of Pottery, referring to the works of Della Robbia (fifteenth century), after rightly describing them as *faïence*, or earthenware, immediately speaks of the opaque glaze as "covering the ill-colored ground of the porcelain;" and again in his notice of Bernard Palissy, he describes

a "bouteille de chasse" of that artist as "a porcelain flask." It is true that early in the fifteenth century continental makers and vendors of earthenware gave to their choicest articles the term "porcelain," probably as being the best substitute they could offer for the coveted Oriental ware. But in these days, when true porcelain is manufactured in all parts of Europe, no such excuse can be offered for the misuse of the name. For earthenware a great variety of clays has at different times been employed, but true "china" or porcelain always consists mainly of a fine white earth, called by the Chinese "kaolin," and obtained in Great Britain chiefly from Cornwall and Devon under the name of "China-clay." Kaolin was accidentally discovered in France by Madame Darnet, wife of a surgeon at St. Yreix, near Limoges. She observed in a ravine, not far from the town, a white earth which she thought might prove of use as a substitute for soap. Her husband sent a specimen to a Bordeaux chemist. It proved to be the true china-clay. Earthenware is always opaque, china transparent in proportion to the fineness of its quality. The transparency of porcelain arises from the clay body becoming saturated with a mass of glassy flux. Under the microscope the two ingredients can be clearly distinguished from each other, the milky mass appearing as a transparent ground mixed with an opaque substance composed of minute globules, arranged in a lineal direction one on the other as articulated threads or little rods, which are interwoven and cross each other in all directions; the want of absolute transparency in the mass being due to the reflection and refraction of light from these crystals.

HINTS ON THE USE OF COLORS.

EXCEPT rose and carmine the colors in underglaze painting do not change—though they lose substance, and, consequently, depth of tint—and they are often subjected to great heat (technically, they are said to be very "hard-fired" or "full-fired") so as to unite them thoroughly with the glaze. It is often advantageous,



OLD CHINESE PORCELAIN VASE.
COLORED IN IMITATION OF THE JAPANESE STYLE.

when carmine and rose are used pure and in any quantity, to apply them when the piece is to be fired for the last time.

Rose or carmine must not be used for flesh tint at all. The general tint of flesh is best given by red No. 1 or light brown used very pale, and should be fixed by a first firing before shadows are added. For shading touches of blue, orange, and light brown may be hatched or stippled on, but shadows should be very delicate. For the lips, etc., carmine or red may be used pure, but the two colors must never be mixed.

Dark green combined with yellow gives such useful hues that it is not necessary to use the light green for mixed tints. It is of value pure, having its own peculiar character.

Purple brown, also, should not be mixed with other colors. For composite tints, rose-color, dark brown, and others suffice.

Clear red orange is best obtained by passing carmine over orange. The hue obtained by mixing is very different.

White enamel may be mixed with any of the colors, except the two reds and purple brown. The best course, however, is to apply the enamel first and pass other colors over it. When white enamel has been fixed by firing, reds and all other colors may be passed over it.



CHINESE PORCELAIN BOWL OF THE 18TH CENTURY.
DECORATED WITH BUDDHIST FIGURES.

Turquoise is used precisely in the same manner as white enamel. Both are applied more solidly than other pigments, a considerable body of each being necessary to a proper effect.

White enamel may be employed like ordinary white paint. Colors can be mixed with it, or struck lightly over it when nearly dry.

A patch of color applied moderately thick may be made to distribute itself more evenly by breathing on it. Pottery painters, when preparing a little color on the palette for delicate and precise work, always breathe upon it. The intimate union and smooth flow of the colors and medium seems to be assisted by the slight warmth thus imparted.

For painting in monochrome, or "en camaieu," as it is sometimes called, the two easiest colors to be used are red-brown and iron violet. Sometimes, in order to make the effect stronger, one or two other tones are added to the principal color.

Always paint in the sense of the object. Use more or less lavender, so that the color may dry more or less quickly. If too much lavender is used, the colors will run in the firing. When the painting is dry, retouch it with the colors mixed with turpentine without any lavender.

A very good effect can be obtained for figures in monochrome with a ground of very light carmine No. 1, the figures being in light gray, retouched with brown-gray, and the accessories, as drapery, foliage, etc., being in very light-colored tints. This kind of work is not, properly speaking, a monochrome, but as the figures are tinted only with gray, it may be so considered.

Sometimes, it will be noticed, colors do not mix well; so mixed colors should be stirred with the brush when used, otherwise they would separate; light blue would rise on dark blue, yellow on green, ivory yellow on carnation.

IN designs for pottery a multitude of small detached details should be avoided, as destroying unity of effect. Straggling forms are not agreeable in border designs, which, however intricate, should have a certain compactness, and not draw the eye forcibly from the painting which they enclose. It is generally sufficient to surround a decorative design with one or two lines of varying width and color. If the border design is broad and elaborate, it requires to be separated from the central subject by a blank space of considerable width. Such a piece as a saucer-shaped plateau, from nine to twelve inches in diameter, is well suited for a decoration of which the border is the principal part, the balance being restored by a small central subject strongly colored. When nearly the whole available space is filled up by a decorative picture, an intricate border is merely wasted labor. The many plaque and plate designs by Camille Piton and others, in back numbers of this magazine, will afford the opportunity of contrasting various styles.